

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Former Prison Guard Sentenced to Prison For Smuggling Contraband

Guard Profited more than \$40K by Distributing Cell Phones, Tobacco

LITTLE ROCK—A Wynne man was sentenced today for his role in smuggling tobacco and cellular telephones into the Federal Correctional Complex in Forrest City where he worked as a guard. United States District Court Judge Kristine G. Baker sentenced Josue Duane Garza, 42, to 12 months and one day in federal prison. Cody Hiland, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today's sentencing.

In June 2018, an inmate at the Federal Correctional Complex in Forrest City, Arkansas, informed prison officials that his family had been purchasing tobacco and cell phones and mailing them, along with cash, to Garza at a P.O. Box in Colt. The inmate reported that another inmate had started the scheme but had been transferred to another facility, leaving this inmate to take over the scheme.

Both inmates confirmed that their parents had purchased tobacco and cell phones, mailed them to Garza's P.O. Box, and included cash. The parents received money orders and cash from other inmates' families, who were paying for the inmates' purchases. The inmates said they split the proceeds with Garza. In an interview, Garza admitted that he had conducted the scheme from October 2017 through July 2018 and received over \$40,000. On August 23, 2019, Garza pleaded guilty to an Information charging him with Bribery of a Public Official.

"This defendant's blatant contraband scheme was an abuse of his authority as a federal prison guard," U.S. Attorney Hiland said. "Smuggling illicit cell phones into prison allows convicted felons to continue their criminal activity, even from inside the prison walls. Today's sentence demonstrates that those who seek to profit from these underhanded dealings will soon find themselves among the inmates they formerly enabled."

In addition to the prison term, Garza was sentenced to one year of supervised release following his imprisonment. The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General, and the case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Benecia Moore.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the
United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, is available online at

<https://www.justice.gov/edar>